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HARAMBEE FLAME

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Poussaint Speaks On African Families In U. S. -Pamela Frizzell

Alvin Poussaint, M.D., prominent black psychiatrist, was a guest lecturer recently at Claire Methodist Church in Omaha. The presentation was sponsored by the newly formed black adoption agency, Black Homes For Black Children, and the Nebraska Department of Child Welfare and was hosted by Ms. Beverly Johnson(a director of the black adoption agency) and Mr. Rodney Wead(from Wesley House in Omaha).

Dr. Poussaint's speech was timely as he spoke on the status of the black family and addressed concerns raised by the recent controversial CBS television documentary by Bill Moyers regarding the "crisis" faced by the nation in relation to the "alarming rate" of pregnancies among black, unwed teenagers. Poussaint pointed out that, even though the crisis of teenage pregnancy does exist, it is, in fact, being addressed by the black community and has been over many years. He pointed out that the white population is also suffering from this problem but that it is not so readily visible in their communities due to their higher usage of adoption and abortion as "alternatives" to child rearing. Blacks as a whole, according to Dr. Poussaint, have a different value system which impels them to keep their children in spite of the undesirable environmental circumstances and to utilize kinship ties to provide a support system, as needed, for the affected individuals. He continued by adding that this value system is being greatly eroded as our community continues to strain to adopt the value system of the majority society, in our effort to blend with bourgeois nuclear family frameworks. Poussaint also dispel-

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"Leadership" Silent On Goode

"The MOVE bombing was an exercise in Ramboesque terrorism. And some of us should have known better when Rizzo got up and applauded it.

"The recent leak in Philly only revealed the tip of an iceberg--that Wilson No Goode was merely 'negligent' in murdering eleven human beings and burning the homes of others, and we are supposed to be content with that.

"Instead of falling back into being mindless sheep, it is up to us to make certain that the pressure stays on so that these fools posing as 'responsible leaders' are put up against the wall. By our silence we become collaborators."

The above remarks, excerpted from the March 10 edition of REVOLUTIONARY WORKER, are attributed to American-born African attorney, Flo Kennedy, speaking at a March 6 press conference in New York City. This press conference was called in response to the Philadelphia Special Investigation Commission's report, which had been leaked to the press prior to its official release.

It has been said that, had the ill-fated MOVE house been in a Caucasian neighborhood, the murderous assault launched against it and its occupants would have never occurred. But this is not the only manner in which the color scheme of the massacre

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POUSSAINT...

led many old Moynihanist stereotypes such as characterized the Moyers report.

Dr. Poussain comprehensively discussed the contributing factors leading to our present dilemma by covering issues from government policies to rock and rhythm-and-blues music and the impacts these matters are having on us. He illustrated how political and economic representations have initiated a trend of "welfare for the rich"(a reference to government bail-out programs for corporations) on one hand and a cycle of poverty for the urban and rural poor--with the message that, if one works hard enough and long enough, he or she can get rich too--on the other. Dr. Poussaint pointed to the absurdity of America's Horatio Alger myth which ignores the fact that it takes something (resources, support, other advantages) to get something. He emphasized that most white wealth is inherited, contrary to the work-ethic claims made by this generation. He discussed America's current grotesque obsession with materialism, wealth, and power(Note the popularity of titillating trash like "Dynasty" and "Dallas.") and how this grates on our black community's self-esteem when we try to incorporate such vulgar and vacant role-modeling into our lives.

Dr. Poussaint highlighted the contradictions of an inequitable Amderican judicial system that inflicts "20 years of confinement to a man who robs a seven-eleven store of $60, tolerates a 50% ratio of black men in our nations' prisons, while politely ignoring the criminal activities of corporate heads who rob Americans of millions and then attaching an aura of glamour to their illegal mergers and investments. He spoke of how rock musicians, such as Prince and Michael Jackson, encourage our youth into hedonistic, irresponsible, and decadent sexual behavior through their seductive lyrics--not to mention the confused gender messages sent to our youth via the feminine-fetish attire worn by these performers. Moreover, as Dr. Poussaint remarked, these performers are bestowed honors by the music and motion picture industries.

These were just some of the factors contributing to our "crisis" which Dr. Poussaint touched upon. He also cited the political commonalities tying together the plights of the homeless, farmers, and minorities in America.

Poussaint did spent time to counterbalance the negativity frquently associated with our realities by pointing to the historical strengths in the black community that have served well to sustain and propel us in an abrasive society. He talked about the strengths of the black family unit as displayed by the uniquely flexible partnership of the black husband and wife, the potently functional extended-family ties, and the important and critical role of the black church. Poussaint motivated the very captivated audience by urging a call to mobilization and continued fervent activism aimed at strengthening our communities and our nation. This renowned and sensitive speaker received a standing ovation at the conclusion of his presentation. The only disappointment about this event was the limited time this guest was able to give for the discussion segment at the close of the program.

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, is a Pan-Africanist newsletter. Thus, the news and views printed here focus primarily on events and developments about and of concern to African people. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinctions among African people based upon place of birth, so any persons of African-descent are referred as "African." However, we ordinarily do not edit excerpts of articles from other publications, contributions from our readers, etc. to reflect this policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily reflect the views of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization. Official positions of the organization shall be identified as such. Generally, all unsigned articles are by the editor. Send your articles(reports, opinions, announcements, etc.), with stamped, self-addressed envelope, to the editor. Poetry also welcomed.

GOODE...

might be turned around. Suppose Wilson Goode's skin were white. Were this the case, the Osage Avenue massacre would not only have been responded to with loud condemnation but possibly riot or armed quasi-rebellion as well. Our "responsible black leadership" would have screamed to the high heavens about "racist police violence," etc. And, unquestionably, such a characterization would have been accurate and appropriate But Wilson Goode is not Caucasian and, despite the murderous police action for which he initially accepted responsibility, we have heard barely a peep from our "responsible black leadership."

In a recent issue of the FLAME, we discussed the matter of American-born Africans' first-negro fixation in which we - led by bourgeois Africans and the black press - laud the fact that one of us has become the "first negro" to take a seat in some Caucasian-controlled bastion of power(real or symbolic) or has achieved some other thing previously or ordinarily not achieved by any African men or women. In singing our praises for these accomplishments by individual African persons, we are, most commonly, profoundly uncritical. Too often, we don't ask the question of whether the man or woman in the new position is making or has made a <u>difference</u>: Are our interests being significantly better served than they were when the position in question was filled by a Caucasian.

When we are speaking of political office-holders, we have to take into account that political offices to not exist in isolation but are entwined with other forces, economics in particular. An African might be mayor of a city in which African people suffer greatly from poverty and that mayor might truly wish to attack this problem. However, aside from the possibility that the mayor is stuck with having to work with a city council which is opposed to our interests, he or she might also be hamstrung by an unwillingness on the part of the local business community to expand its labor base or/and take other measures that would facilitate efforts to attack poverty. In short, any African who holds political office needs more than just the will to serve our interests. He or she needs the cooperation of various political and economic forces in order to deliver on pledges to move on behalf of his or her African constituency. So we should be realistic in our expectations. Nevertheless, we have a right to demand of African office-holders that they earnestly attempt to act in our interests. When they fail to do so, we have a right and an obligation to be critical of them and, moreover, to condemn them in cases where they clearly initiate or take part in actions/policies that are <u>opposed</u> to our interests.

In the instance of Mayor Wilson Goode, we have the actual murder of African people through a police action, which had been planned for months prior to the event, approved of by an African. And while it is possible that Goode did not approve of every single detail of the action which resulted in the slaughter of African people, the fact that this mayor apparently gave police virtual carte blanche to "get rid of the niggers the best way you can" is not indicative of any mere negligence but of an obscene and probably opportunist contempt for a group of African people whom he viewed as undesirably different. That so many of our "respectable black leadership" have remained silent on the murders of the MOVE people suggests that they, like Mayor Goode, are only prepared to act or speak on behalf of African people's interests when it suits their own personal ends and/or when some contingent of the Caucasian Establishment gives the okay.

The seriousness of our situation here in the U.S. requires that we throw off the yoke of our first-negro fixation and follow the example of our Sisters and Brothers in Azania(South Africa): when an African acts like or in consort with those whom oppress us, he or she must be counted among them and treated accordingly.

-Editor

You are welcome to submit articles to the FLAME. Send submissions to: HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org./Attn: Mondo; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500.

FLAME Editor - Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa
(aka David Rice)

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Africans And Business In The U.S.

"But even as Blacks are stretching out in terms of their business interests, it must be noted that 58 of the top 100 grossing Black businesses are concentrated in three fields: auto(44), construction(9), and hair care(6).

"And we're sorry to note that those 100 businesses only grossed a little over $2.6 billion in 1984(most recent figures available). That paltry sum comes to a little over 1% of the estimated $200 billion that Blacks collectively spend in a year's time. Looking at it another way, $2.6 billion is a little over one-fifth of the gross earnings(over $10 billion) of McDonald's in 1984."

--Excerpted from an article by Walter M. Perkins on pages 51 through 62 of the March/April edition of THE BLACK SCHOLAR.

Haiti: Same Old Wine In New Bottle?

"..U.S. corporations were cordial companions of the Black dictator(Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier). As of 1985, about two hundred American companies had large plants on the island, including United Technologies, General Motors, Sperry Rand, GTE, and MacGregor Sporting Goods. Wages are typically $3 a day, and the Duvalier's brutal private militia, the Tontons Macoutes, terrorized working class leaders. Despite outrageous violations of human rights, the Reagan administration was also quite cozy with Duvalier...

"This situation changed only in recent months. The Duvalier regime was too inefficient and too corrupt even by American standards. In 1985, Haiti's external deficit increased by 45%, and the country's inflation rate was 80%. Labor and political unrest began to accelerate. The task for the U.S. corporations and Reaganites was to discard their Black neocolonial puppet, and to rearrange the unsettled domestic political system without harming their vested interests.

"The U.S. government then took drastic steps to guarantee 'Duvalierism without Duvalier." A U.S. military plane was dispatched from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to pick up the desperate dictator. The French were pressured to grant Duvalier a temporary visa. A military junta was hastily organized to restore order. The country's new 'leaders' include Lieutenant General Henri Namphy, who was a beneficiary of Duvalier's graft and also served as head of the armed forces. Alix Cineas, Duvalier's former minister of Public Works, and Colonel Prosper Avril, who had ties to the Tontons Macoutes, are also at the top of the new regime. ...Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince has received dozens of calls from American corporations requesting information on initiating plants in Haiti. Low wages and a pro-U.S., Duvalier-trained junta are the reasons."

--Excerpted from an article by Manning Marable on page 4 of the March 8 edition of the MILWAUKEE COURIER.

Southern African Nations Strengthen Ties

"In spite of continuing military and economic pressure from South Africa, the nine-member Southern African Development Coordination Conference(SADCC) has commemorated another year with new advances in changing North-South relations.

At its annual consultative conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, Jan. 30-31, SADCC concluded an unprecedented comprehensive region-to-region accord with Scandinavian countries and a cooperation agreement with the European Economic Community.

"...Although SADCC members remain heavily linked to South Africa economically and via trade routes, the organization is able to point to some concrete steps that have been taken toward decreasing dependence. Telecommunications traffic, which used to go almost exclusively through Johannesburg, will soon cease to pass through South Africa at all. Regional electricity grids which have recently begun operation will offer alternative sources of power to Botswana and Swaziland.

(Continued on next page)

"Agricultural research for the region is no longer coordinated by the South Africans, for the Souther African Center for Cooperation in Agricultural Research(SACCAR) is fully operative in Botswana. Malawi now has a road link through Mbeya, in southern Tanzania, and on to the port of Dar es Salaam, which provides an alternative to the southern route and to the besieged Nacala port route through Mozambique; 30% of Malawian transport now goes north.

"With the current grain surpluses in Malawi and Zimbabwe, a SADCC reserve of 180,000 tons in Malawi and 250,000 tons in Zimbabwe will be established this year. The grain will be solely for export to SADCC members and will help to reduce dependence on imports from outside SADCC, especially from South Africa."

--Excerpted from "North-South Pacts Are Inked At Harare Meeting" on page 6 and 7 of the March 10 edition of AFRICA NEWS.

Things You Might Not Know About Gaddafi

"Although Gaddafi is caught in a crossfire of Western criticism, hopes for his overthrow are slim. He has built an impressive social infrastructure in his country that compares well with that of any other oil state. Every Libyan family gets a house and a basic income of about $1,000 a month and is entitled to a television set and a car. Education is compulsory.

"Medical care and hospitalization are free. Special cases are flown, at government expense, to foreign clinics.

"Women--who have been second-class citizens in virtually every other Moslem land--are guaranteed the right to initiate divorce proceedings and, after divorce, alimony. The new generation of Libyan women is taking over the universities, flying jets, and launching missles. Egyptian and Palestinian women also are trained in Libya.

"For his own land, the creator of the 'Third Way' has instituted 'direct democracy' based on a system of People's Committees and People's Congresses, where everyday problems and foreign policy alike can be discussed and decided publicly. This model is meant to guarantee the masses' participation in politics and to prevent Libya's 'falling back into barbarism and capitalism' after Gaddafi dies."

--Excerpted from an article by Christoph Bertram on pages 25-27 in the March edition of WORLD PRESS REVIEW.

Ujima Youth Theatre Performs At Pen

On Sunday evening, March 16, the members of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization were treated to a performance of three short plays by the Ujima Youth Theatre of Omaha and a modeling show by a group of Sisters belonging to a Girl Scout troop in Omaha. The three plays included interpretations of two African folk tales and an adaptation of a short story by "Uncle Mondo." The modeling show featured interpretations in dress of eight important African queens: Nefertiti, Nzinga, Sheba, and others. The various young performers were directed by Idu Mbaka Maduli and his wife, Laura Partridge Nedds, as well as Patricia Patterson.

Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization members enjoyed the program immensely and were caught off-guard by the talent and enthusiasm of the children of the Youth Theatre in particular. In that most H.A.-C.O. members either have young children or young brothers and/or sisters, nieces and/or nephews, etc., the brightness of these little children had special meaning to them.

We thank Idu, Laura, Patricia, Carrie, Charmaine, Eshana, Chris, Saveay, Leslie, Chantel, Lauriette, LaTonya, Julie, Rita, and Ginny for bringing beauty into our lives.

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One - Forty Second

-Agbala Nwany Acho Aziokwu

i don't know
how you got inside
to make me ugly
why cornrows and afros
and black
make for nothings
while hotirons mean at least i tried-
at least i didn't

sister call, say she hear i aint kep up
with the latest thang
and i used to be, i used to be so pretty.
Dey tell me don't give up
hand me paste
to shade my face
from its natural color.
and the man who buys me
to wear high heels
stole some grease
to lard me down, at his mama's house
powder & oil make me out
a 1940's minstrel clown
i steps high, looking fine
till i leave our neighbor-hood
leaning on white, at the light
i hear me knowing
we ain't fooling nobody.